

THE ABUSE OF CHARITY WORK

The following circular letter has been sent to all members of the Hennepin County Medical Society, which includes practically all the physicians in Minneapolis:

The Public Health and Hospital Committee of the Hennepin County Medical Society is anxious to receive specific complaints from members of the society of violations of the rules of the various clinics and charitable organizations of the city by people who can afford to pay for medical service.

We feel that when the members of the medical profession do the work in all of these agencies, and, in addition, 40 per cent (roughly estimated) of their private practice is without compensation, those who can afford to pay should do so.

We hear constantly complaints of excessive doctors' fees. Possibly the use of free clinics by a large number who could afford to pay at least a small fee may to some extent be responsible for this condition.

We are anxious to get some definite data on this question, and would appreciate concrete information in regard to specific instances of violations of this kind and also of attempts on the part of social workers to lead people away from their own physicians to free clinics.

Of course, it is understood that this information shall be entirely confidential.—Editorial in The Journal-Lancet, April 1, 1923.

Congress and Health Legislation—During the four sessions of Congress from April 11, 1921, to March 4, 1923, over 21,000 bills and resolutions were introduced in both branches; 16,700 in the House and 5419 in the Senate. Of these, about 350 bills and resolutions are of direct interest to physicians. In other words, only 1.6 per cent of the measures before Congress have dealt with public health. Nine hundred and thirty-one laws, of which 655 were public and 276 of private character, were placed on the statute books during the Sixty-seventh Congress. Only thirty-one of these, or 3.3 per cent, have a direct bearing on public health. The health bills which passed include, among others, the following public laws and public resolutions:

Health Laws Passed

No. 47. Veterans' Bureau created. August 9, 1921. (H. R. 6611.)

No. 51. Packers Act. Regulating interstate and foreign commerce in livestock and dairy products. (H. R. 6320.)

No. 74. Cincinnati Health Exposition, cancellation stamp for. October 10, 1921. (H. R. 8365.)

No. 78. Veterans in Hospitals, tobacco for. October 14, 1921. (S. 1718.)

No. 96. Anti-Beer Act, supplement to national prohibition law. November 23, 1921. (H. R. 7294.)

No. 97. Maternity and Infancy, promotion of welfare of (Sheppard-Towner law). November 23, 1921. (S. 1039.)

No. 110. Searcy hospital for colored insane in Alabama, land for. (H. R. 6961), November 5, 1921.

No. 125. Water supply for Fort Monroe. (H. R. 7204.)

No. 129. Medical and surgical supplies transferred by Army to Russian relief (S. 2708), January 19, 1922.

No. 194, No. 216, and No. 273. Hospitals for veterans. (H. R. 10,864, H. R. 11,547, H. R. 11,588, respectively), April 14, 1922; May, 1922; July 1, 1922.

No. 227. Narcotics prohibited from importation

or exportation except for medicinal purposes. (H. R. 2193), May 26, 1922.

No. 225. Pay of Army, Navy, Public Health Service, etc. (H. R. 10,972), June 7, 1922.

No. 318. Tariff Act. (H. R. 7456), September 21, 1922.

No. 330. Leprosy station in Hawaii. (H. R. 11,589), June 19, 1922.

No. 347. Coal Commission. (H. R. 12,377.)

No. 352. Fees, surgeons of Pension Bureau. (S. 3540), September 22, 1922.

No. 430. Federal Leprosarium, additional buildings for. February, 1923. (S. 3721.)

No. 460. War Risk Insurance, amendment concerning. March 2, 1923. (H. R. 10,003.)

No. 463. Hospital in Arkansas, transfer. March 2, 1923. (H. R. 12,751.)

No. 472. Sewage drain at Miami, Florida. March 2, 1923. (H. R. 13,272.)

No. 513. Filled milk, prohibition of in interstate commerce. March 3, 1923. (H. R. 8086.)

No. 516. Reclassification of Government positions and salaries. March 3, 1923. (H. R. 8928.)

No. 542. War Risk Insurance, amendment concerning. March 3, 1923. (H. R. 14,401.)

No. 519. Butter, standard for. March 3, 1923. (H. R. 12,052.)

No. 536. Compensation for injured government employes. March 3, 1923. (H. R. 14,222.)

Public Resolutions

No. 63. Disposal of articles produced by patients of Veterans' Bureau. (H. J. Res. 313.)

No. 65. Pollution of Navigable Waters convention. (H. J. Res. 297), August, 1922.

No. 75. Water supply of Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas. (S. J. Res. 216.)

No. 96. Narcotic control, international co-operation in. March 2, 1923. (H. J. Res. 453.)

In looking over these thirty-one laws, it will be noted that a dozen or so are of considerable importance to national health. These include the acts for creating the Veterans' Bureau and the hospitalization of veterans, the maternity and infancy law, the anti-beer measure, the laws relating to narcotics, increase of pay for the Public Health Service, reclassification of government salaries, the tariff, the act increasing facilities at the Federal leprosarium, and the filled milk law. There is, of course, some difference of opinion regarding a few of these laws, such as the Maternity Act and the filled milk law, but these dozen measures mentioned are the ones which will influence public health.

Health Bills Not Passed

Since only thirty-one health bills became laws, about 320 failed of passage. Many of these were minor measures and some of them "freak" ones, and a large number never got out of committee. Among the more important health bills which did not pass may be mentioned: The resolutions to amend the Constitution relative to restriction of child labor; transfer of the activities of the Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board to the Department of Justice; the Fess-Capper bill for Federal aid to physical education; commissions for sanitary engineers in the U. S. Public Health Service; reorganization of the U. S. Public Health Service; the uniform marriage and divorce bill; sale of Marine Hospital at Detroit; a number of bills relating to tuberculosis; and a couple of anti-vivisection measures. The District of Columbia, for which Congress legislates, fared particularly badly with respect to health measures. Bills to regulate milk, venereal diseases, optometry, and child welfare were not acted upon.